

AGENDA ITEM #1

Consideration of Resolution in Support of Indiana Legislation to Address Senior Fishing Licenses; Administrative Cause No. 07-027D

At the request of the Chair, a draft resolution has been prepared for consideration by the Natural Resources Commission with respect to legislation to address fishing licenses for seniors (those over aged 64). Currently, this growing and increasingly active segment of Hoosier society is exempted from licensure. The modest fees sought in the legislation, and the substantial federal reimbursements through the Sport Fish Restoration Act which would result if the legislation were enacted, provide an important opportunity to our state.

Following immediately below is a more detailed explanation by the DNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife of the legislation and of this opportunity. At the conclusions of the Division's explanation is a draft non-binding resolution.

Explanation by Division of Fish and Wildlife

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources is asking senior anglers to support a continued exemption for anglers age 65 or older born before April 1, 1943, a \$3 yearly Senior License and \$17 Resident Senior Fish for Life License for Indiana residents 64 and older born after March 31, 1943. The \$17 Senior Fish for Life License is the same price 64 year old anglers are currently paying for their yearly license and would be the last fishing license they would ever need to purchase. Every \$3 yearly Senior License and \$17 Senior Fish for Life License would provide an additional \$7.90 in federal revenue for stocking fish and maintaining public access.

Under the current system, Indiana senior and licensed anglers are giving away millions of dollars to improve fishing in other states. Indiana's public water access, fish stocking and fish management programs are funded by fishing licenses and the federal Sport Fish Restoration Program. The federal program is funded by excise taxes on fishing equipment and boat fuel. These federal funds are distributed to Indiana based in part on the number of licensed anglers in the state. Every new senior angler would increase the amount of federal money returned to the state.

Many states, including all of Indiana's surrounding states, require seniors to be licensed. Because Indiana's 90,000 65 year old and older senior anglers do not purchase licenses, money currently spent on equipment such as rods, reels, lures and boat fuel is distributed to other states.

For every license purchased by seniors annually, Indiana fisheries programs will receive \$7.90 of federal funds in return. That translates into close to \$2.3 million to build more boat ramps, stock lakes and expand fish research in Indiana over the next 10 years. Federal reimbursement regulations require a state license fee cover license costs, which in Indiana would be about \$3.

Indiana lawmakers are considering establishing a senior license in the legislative session to recoup funds that should flow back to Indiana.

Senior anglers would not have to purchase a trout/salmon stamp.

- Anyone 17 years and older would be required to have a license to fish in public waters.
- The Indiana yearly senior license would be cheaper than senior licenses in any adjoining state.

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What will funds be used for?

Expanding and maintaining public fishing and boating access sites on public lakes and streams throughout Indiana.

The DNR maintains over 350 sites, but many lakes and streams still lack public access. Additional funds are needed to purchase lands from willing sellers, construct boat ramps, parking lots, entrance roads and handicapped accessible facilities. In addition, increased funding is needed to maintain these access sites, including the periodic rebuilding of worn-out ramps.

Reinvesting in Indiana's aging state fish hatcheries.

The DNR operates eight fish hatcheries that provide over 20 million fish of 15 different species for stocking in public waters each year. The two newest hatcheries are 20 years old with others dating back to early in the last century. As they age, repair costs mount and without reinvestment, they will not be able to supply the fish necessary for tomorrow's anglers.

In 2000, one in eight Hoosiers were seniors. By 2040, that number will increase to one in five.

There are approximately 95,500 Indiana residents over age 64 who fish each year.

Indiana fishing programs will be eligible for a projected \$7.90 per additional licensed angler. Indiana's 90,000 65 year old and older senior anglers will make Indiana eligible for close to \$2.3 million over the next 10 years.

Indiana Fishing Facts

Anglers spent \$519 million fishing in Indiana in 2001 (\$472 per angler)

- Trip-related expenses: \$153 million
- Equipment: \$347 million

874,000 people fish in Indiana each year

Collectively, anglers spend 14.2 million days fishing in Indiana

Indiana obligated over \$4 million of federal Sport Fish Restoration funds last year. Funds were used for programs such as aquatic resources education, boating access and fish stocking. State/Federal funding partnership enabled Indiana to spend \$5.3 million on valuable fishing programs for \$1.3 million in Indiana funds.

In 2005, Indiana had 460,695 certified fishing license holders and sold 530,286 fishing licenses (does not include anglers under 17 or over 65 years of age, or anglers fishing on private property).

DNR stocks over 20 million fish in Indiana waters each year.

Annual increase in revenue from federal reimbursement from the sale of the Senior Fishing and Fish for Life Licenses

# of 64 yr old Senior Anglers	5,460*
Federal Reimbursement per License	\$7.90
Annual Fiscal Impact	\$43,000

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The fiscal impact of 64 year old or older resident anglers purchasing a \$17 Senior Fish for Life License and a \$3 annual Senior License is **\$43,000 annually** and will have a cumulative fiscal effect with each year class being eligible for federal aid reimbursement.

*5,460 resident 64 year old anglers currently purchase \$17 yearly fishing licenses and are counted for federal reimbursement.

Annual Fees from 17 other states

Florida*	\$13.50
Idaho*	\$11.75
Maryland	\$5.00
Montana	\$8.00
Nevada	\$13.00
New York	\$5.00
North Dakota	\$3.00
Oklahoma	\$6.00
Oregon	\$12.00
Pennsylvania	\$11.00
South Dakota	\$10.00
Tennessee*	\$11.00
Utah	\$21.00
Virginia	\$ 7.00
Wisconsin	\$7.00

(*Figures may include other privileges such as hunting, trout fishing or saltwater angling.)

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Draft RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INDIANA LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS SENIOR FISHING LICENSES

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources is in great measure founded upon the time-honored principles and ideals of Colonel Richard Lieber as set forth in 1917 in his Conservation of the New Patriotism and in other documents;

WHEREAS, included among these is the philosophy every person must serve as a trustee of the nation for our natural resources;

WHEREAS, fees paid by persons who receive services or enjoy the benefits of natural or cultural resources have come to be commonly known as “user fees”;

WHEREAS, the Natural Resources Commission reaffirmed this policy in 2002 with a Resolution supporting efforts by the Department of Natural Resources to support agency funding with user fees.

WHEREAS, excessive dependence on general funding from the Indiana General Assembly can threaten the consistency of services and the integrity of resources, particularly during periods of economic recession;

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources stocks over 20,000,000 fish in Indiana waters each year;

WHEREAS, approximately 874,000 people fish in Indiana each year, of whom approximately 95,500 are Indiana residents over aged 64;

WHEREAS, the Indiana General Assembly is currently considering House Bill 1299 that would provide for a resident senior fishing license for \$3 and a resident senior Fish for Life license for \$17;

WHEREAS, these license fees are reasonable and supportive of the public trust and directly attributable to those who enjoy the benefits of Indiana’s public fisheries;

WHEREAS, last year Indiana obligated more than \$4,000,000 of federal Sport Fish Restoration funds, with these funds used for programs such as aquatic resource education, boating access and fish stocking;

WHEREAS, in addition to revenues derived directly from an Indiana resident senior fishing license and a resident senior Fish for Life license pursuant to House Bill 1299, enactment of the legislation would make Indiana eligible for an additional reimbursement of \$7.90 per license from the federal Sport Fish Restoration funds;

WHEREAS, with projections for the numbers of persons over 64 who would contribute these license fees during the next ten years, Indiana would be eligible for nearly \$2,300,000 during this period;

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WHEREAS, this legislation would help protect the consistency of agency services and the integrity of fisheries resources both now and in future, particularly during periods of economic recession; and

WHEREAS, this effort is consistent with the time-honored philosophy of Colonel Richard Lieber

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED the Natural Resources Commission endorses the purpose, philosophy, design and terms expressed in House Bill 1299 to establish a resident senior fishing license and a resident senior Fish for Life license in support of Indiana's fisheries and the public trust.